

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-25 NEA-10 IO-14 SSO-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 DPW-01 AID-20 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 DRC-01 /149 W

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 173

INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L JC PARIS 1600

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, VS

SUBJECT: GVN-PRG BILATERALS: 37TH PLENARY SESSION, JANUARY 18, 1974

1. SUMMARY: DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER VIEN, JUST RETURNED FROM A PROLONGED VISIT TO SAIGON, PRESENTED A NEW GVN PROPOSAL TO HOLD GENERAL ELECTIONS JULY 20. VIEN'S REMARKS, AVOWEDLY A MESSAGE OF NATIONAL RECONCILIATION IN KEEPING WITH THE SPIRIT OF THE TET SEASON, ALSO PROPOSED THAT THE TWO SIDES ACCEPT TWO PROCEDURAL MEASURES TO IMPROVE THE NEGOTIATING CLIMATE. THESE SUGGESTIONS WERE THAT THE DELEGATIONS USE COURTEOUS, RESTRAINED LANGUAGE WITH ONE ANOTHER, AND THAT THE TWO SIDES LUNCH TOGETHER AFTER EACH PLENARY SESSION, SO AS TO ALLOW INFORMAL CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE DELEGATION CHIEFS. THI (PRG) PRESENTED A REVIEW OF THE SITUATION SINCE THE AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED, A DIATRIBE ATTEMPTING TO BLACKEN THE US AND GVN. IN A SUBSEQUENT PRG PRESS CONFERENCE VIEN'S ELECTION PROPOSAL WAS REJECTED, WITHOUT REFERENCE TO HIS TWO PROCEDURAL SUGGESTIONS. IT WAS AGREED TO RECONVENE JANUARY 25. END SUMMARY.

2. VIEN (GVN) SPOKE FIRST. (ABSENT FROM THE TALKS SINCE OCTOBER 4, VIEN HAD RETURNED FROM LENGTHY CONSULTATIONS IN SAIGON JANUARY 16.) STATING HIS PURPOSE AS DELIVERY OF A MESSAGE OF NATIONAL RECONCILIATION
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IACTION APPROPRIATE TO THE APPROACHING TET HOLIDAYS, VIEN BRIEFLY

REVIEWED THE HISTORY OF GVN EFFORTS TO INTRODUCE PROPOSALS IMPLEMENTING THE CONFERENCE'S DUTIES UNDER CHAPTER IV OF THE AGREEMENT. HE THEN SUBMITTED THE LATEST SUCH PROPOSAL: THE HOLDING OF GENERAL ELECTIONS JULY 20. MOREOVER, HE INDICATED GVN READINESS TO SETTLE, "RAPIDLY AND TO MUTUAL SATISFACTION", THE THREE MAIN PROBLEMS OUTSTANDING - ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF NATIONAL RECONCILIATION AND CONCORD, GUARANTEE OF DEMOCRATIC FREEDOMS, AND THE QUESTION OF VN ARMED FORCES IN SVN.

3. JULY 20 WAS FITTING DATE FOR ELECTIONS, VIEN CONTINUED, BECAUSE ON THAT TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GENEVA ACCORDS A NEW PHASE OF NATIONAL UNITY COULD THEREBY BEGIN, TURNING THE "DAY OF SHAME" INTO THE "DAY OF RECONCILIATION AND CONCORD". RUNIFICATION OF NORTH AND SOUTH COULD THEREAFTER BEGIN IN ERNEST. VIEN ASKED THE OTHER SIDE TO REFLECT ON THIS PROPOSAL AND NOT TO GIVE ITS RESPONSE IMMEDIATELY. HE PROPOSED THAT THE PRG REPLY BE FURNISHED AT A SESSION ON JANUARY 25, I.E. THAT THE CONFERENCE TAKE NO RECESS AT TET.

4. IN CLOSING, AND STILL IN THE SAME CONCILIATORY TONE, VIEN MADE TWO ADDITIONAL PROPOSALS, THESE CONCERNING THE NEGOTIATING ATMOSPHERE. FIRST, HE URGED USE OF "COURTEOUS LANGUAGE AND THE MAXIMUM RESTRAINT" IN CONFERENCE DELIBERATIONS. SECOND, HE SUGGESTED THAT THE TWO DELEGATIONS HAVE LUNCH TOGETHER FOLLOWING EACH PLenary SESSION, TO ALLOW "FRIENDLIER CONVERSATIONS NOT NECESSARILY ABOUT CONFERENCE PROBLEMS". THIS, HE ADDED, WOULD ALLOW THE CHIEFS OF DELEGATION TO TALK TOGETHER IN "A MORE RELAXED ATMOSPHERE", WHILE OTHER DELEGATION MEMBERS DID LIKEWISE. THE FIRST SUCH LUNCHEON COULD OCCUR THIS VERY DAY, OR ON JANUARY 25 - THE THIRD DAY OF THE TET SEASON.

5. PRG "AMBASSADOR" THI'S PRESENTATION WAS A RECITATION OF DEVELOPMENTS SINCE SIGNATURE OF THE AGREEMENT. THE PRG, HE MAINTAINED, HAD INVARIABLY UPHELD AND IMPLEMENTED AGREEMENT PROVISIONS. THE PRG "JUST POLICY" HAD, DESPITE WARTIME CONDITIONS, BROUGHT "A SOUND LIFE BASED ON CONCORD AND FREEDOM TO THE INHABITANTS OF THE LIBERATED ZONES, WHO, IN FACT, ARE THE MASTERS OF THEIR OWN DESTINY". MEANWHILE THE US AND GVN HAD, FIRST, VIOLATED EARLY ALL PROVISIONS OF THE AGREEMENT AND, SECOND, CARRIED OUT A WAR OF EXTERMINATION REplete WITH ATROCITIES

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AKIN TO THE MY LAI TRAGEDY, THI ALLEGED. IN ALL RESPECTS THE GVN HAD ALLEGEDLY "OPENLY TAMPERED" ON THE AGREEMENT, WHILE THE US HAD NOW SENT MORE THAN 25,000 DISGUISED MILITARY ADVISORS TO SVN AND WAS FURNISHING OVER TWO BILLION DOLLARS WORTH OF ARMS AID EACH YEAR TO THE GVN. FINALLY, TH HISTORY OF ALLEGEDLY ENLIGHTENED PRG PROPOSALS AT THE BILATERAL CONFERENCE CONTRASTED WITH PERSISTANT GVN OBSTRUCTIONISM, INCLUDING INSISTENCE UPON ORGANIZING ELECTIONS "WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK

F (THE GVN) FASCIST DICTATORSHIP".

6. PRG SPOKESMAN THAO'S POST-SESSION PRESS CONFERENCE PICKED UP TH'S EARLIER REPTETION OF THE FAMILIAR THREE PRG DEMANDS (EFFECTIVE CEASEFIRE, PRISONER REEASE, DEMOCRATIC FREEDOMS) AND ADDED A FOURTH - "ORGANIZING FREE, DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS". THIS REFLECTION OF VIEN'S PROPOSAL WAS JOINED BY A SPECIFIC REPUDIATION OF IT AS A STATE AND DECEITFUL PRESENTATION OF AN "ARBITRARY DATE". THAO TRIED TO PLACE FULL BLAME ON THE US FOR THE IMPASSE AT THE TALKS, HOLDING THAT THE GVN WAS NO MORE THAN THE INSTRUMENT OF US NEOCOLONIALISM.

7. IT WAS AGREED TO RECNVENE JANUARY 25.
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